



Sacred & Classical Music Recital

Saturday, August 5, 2017

Organist: Ben LaPrairie

Vocalist: JC Cantrell

St. Dominic Church

Program Notes

Trio Sonata No. 5, BWV 529

Johann Sebastian Bach

(1685-1750)

i. Allegro Vivace

ii. Largo

iii. Allegro

This piece is part of a collection of six organ trio sonatas compiled in Leipzig by Bach for his eldest son Willhelm Friedemann in the late 1720s. Using both material from previous compositions as well as fresh material, there is speculation that the set may have been intended as an organ instructional method, in the way the *Well-Tempered Clavier* was meant as a way to perfect keyboard technique. Regardless of its intended use, it is considered one of his masterpieces for organ. Though written for one performer, these are considered trio sonatas as there are three distinct voices – the two manuals, and the pedals.

- The first movement, *Allegro Vivace*, is known to be completely original material for this Trio Sonata
- The second movement, *Largo*, was likely composed in Weimar and was often used as an intermediate movement after the Prelude and before the Fugue of Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in C Major, BWV 545*.
- The third movement, *Allegro* may be based on a now-lost instrumental trio sonata.

Program Notes

Love Bade Me Welcome from *Five Mystical Songs*

**Ralph Vaughan Williams
(1872-1958)**

Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* are settings of poems by George Herbert from Herbert's 1633 collection of poems titled "The Temple: Sacred Poems". George Herbert was a Welsh-born poet, orator and Anglican priest. After serving in the British Parliament of King George I, Herbert gave up his secular ambitions and took holy orders in the Church of England, spending the rest of his life as the rector of the little parish of St Andrews Church, Salisbury. Herbert was noted for unfailing care for his parishioners.

Herbert's religious poems are characterized by a precision of language, a metrical versatility, and an ingenious use of imagery. His poetry eventually became hymns in the Anglican church and he is recognized today as one of the foremost British devotional lyricists.

Vaughan Williams composed the song collection *Five Mystical Songs* over a span of 5 years in the early 1900s, conducting the premiere himself in 1911 at the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester. *Love Bade Me Welcome* is the third movement of the collection. The poetic imagery provides insight into the deep respect George Herbert had for the blessings of Christ in the Eucharist. There are two "entities" in the poem: Love and the poet. In the allegory of the poem, Love is God (Christ) and the poet is a sinner. The poem climaxes with Christ offering His flesh to the sinner (Eucharist), and the sinner, accepting God's forgiveness, accepts the Eucharistic sacrifice and "eats."

III. Love Bade Me Welcome

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back.
Guilty of dust and sin
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lacked anything.
A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:
Love said, You shall be he.
I the unkind, ungrateful?
Ah, my dear, I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?
Truth Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?
My dear, then I will serve.
You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:
So I did sit and eat.

Program Notes

Cortège et Litanie, Op. 19

Marcel Dupré
(1886-1971)

The son of an organist, Marcel Dupré began training very early. He went to the Paris Conservatoire for both organ and composition at age 18 and won the Prix de Rome at 28. Giving thousands of recital performances across the world, he is particularly known for a series of ten concerts in Paris of Bach's complete organ works (from memory!). Dupré was the organist at Notre-Dame from 1916-1922 and taught at the Paris Conservatoire from 1926-1954.

Beginning as incidental music for a play, Dupré reworked this material into his set *Four Pieces for Organ*, published as Opus 19 in 1921. The piece was so well received, it was demanded that he arrange the second movement, Cortège et Litanie, for organ and orchestra. This fully orchestrated arrangement premiered at Wanamaker's Department Store in Philadelphia, accompanied by the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Leopold Stokowski.

This movement has two major sections

- The Cortège (music for a procession to a holy place), and
- The Litanie serving as an instrumental litany of prayers.

Prelude and Fugue in A Minor, BWV 543

J.S. Bach

Bach likely composed this Prelude and Fugue in A minor between 1708-1717, while serving as the court organist for the Duke in Saxe-Weimar. Focused on a descending, chromatic line with arpeggiated chords above, this prelude is highly embellished and rhapsodic.

The Fugue is set 6/8 time, instead of the 4/4 of the prelude, and is the final version of Bach's harpsichord Fugue in A minor, BWV 944 from 1708. Focusing on a similar theme, the Fugue is full of sequences which lead to one of Bach's most virtuosic cadenzas. Unlike many of his keyboard works set in a minor key, BWV 543 does not end on a major 'Picardy third', but instead concludes in the somber key it began in.

Berceuse à la mémoire de Louis Vierne

Pierre Cochereau
(1924-1984)

Pierre Cochereau was a French organist, known for his impressive improvisational skills. Over his varied career he made 25 recital tours to the US, was in turn the director of the Le Mans, Nice, and Lyon conservatories and was the named organist at Notre-Dame. Many of his organ improvisations were transcribed and published, including this *Berceuse à la mémoire de Louis Vierne*, performed in May 1973 at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. The piece is a meditation on Louis Vierne, the principal organist for Notre-Dame from 1900-1937 and is partially based on a melody he composed *Dodo, l'enfant do komponierte, das bei Durand*.

Program Notes

Easter **from *Five Mystical Songs***

RV Williams

Easter is the first movement of the *Five Mystical Songs* collection. For this poem, Herbert (who was a skilled instrumental musician) turns to his lute to assist him with the imagery. Combining text from Psalm 57: 8-10 and the theme of Saint Paul's letter to the Romans, Herbert explores how we are "made right with God" through Christ's death on the cross and resurrection.

I. Easter

Rise heart; thy Lord is risen.
Sing his praise without delays,
Who takes thee by the hand,
that thou likewise with him may'st rise;
That, as his death calcined thee to dust,
His life may make thee gold, and much more, just.
Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part with all thy art.
The crosse taught all wood to resound his name, who bore the same.
His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key
Is the best to celebrate this most high day.
Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song pleasant and long;
Or since all music is but three parts vied and multiplied.
O let thy blessed Spirit bear a part,
And make up our defects with his sweet art.

Symphony No. 5, Op. 42 **v. Toccata**

Charles-Marie Widor
(1844-1937)

Charles-Marie Widor composed his Symphony No. 5 for Organ in 1879. One of ten organ symphonies he wrote, the composer was not satisfied with the piece, and it underwent many revisions after publication. The whole work consists of five movements, the last of which is known simply as "Widor's Toccata", as it is his most recognized piece. It is frequently used as recessional music for Christmas ceremonies and weddings including Royal weddings in Denmark, Norway, and Britain - the most recent being that of Prince William to Catherine Middleton.